

ACCESS AMERICA

What is Earth Day?

Earth Day and the Rise of Environmental Consciousness



Take Pride in America, Living Lands and Waters and other volunteers pick up trash along the Potomac River. (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

Washington -- Earth Day, April 22, is the annual U.S. celebration of the environment and a time for Americans to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central

organizing force behind it, though several nongovernmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. It affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment -- once the province of a few conservationists -- has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

Earth Day celebrates its 37th anniversary in 2007. What began in 1970 as a protest movement has evolved into a global celebration of the environment and commitment to its protection. The history of Earth

Also in this issue

Energy Policy Critical Presidential Campaign Issue.....	2
Program Announcements.....	3
Alumni Spotlight.....	4
Calendar.....	4

Day mirrors the growth of environmental awareness over the last three decades, and the legacy of Earth Day is the certain knowledge that the environment is a universal concern.

This article is adapted from an article on America.gov, a web site delivering information about current U.S. foreign policy and about American life and culture produced by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs

From the Ambassador

Earth Day gives us pause to think about the resources we use, the benefits we gain from them, and the impact they have on our and our children's future. Over the years the world has developed a better understanding of the impact that progress in industry, agriculture, and technology has had on the environment. While there was a time that environmental issues were on the margins of political discourse around the world, they are important issues today. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1970 due to building public concern. Currently, many mainstream politicians and global citizens address the importance of sustainable development and environmentally sound practices. In American presidential elections this year we see environmental and energy policies discussed more widely and more often than in previous presidential elections. Many Americans wish to ensure that progress not harm future generations. As the former governor of Wisconsin and co-founder of Earth Day Gaylord Nelson said, "The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."

—Robert F. Godec

Energy Policy has become a Critical Presidential Campaign Issue

Earth Day and the Rise of Environmental Consciousness

Of all the issues being debated in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, energy policy is perhaps the most important. Modern economies worldwide, including the American economy, depend on a steady flow of energy. Making sure that gasoline, electricity and other fuels are available for businesses and households is a top priority. In recent years, energy policy has come under pressure for several reasons.

Those reasons have to do with the environment, security and the global economy. The use of fossil fuels such as coal and oil are leading to climate change. America is a large importer of oil from foreign lands – supplies that may be put at risk of a terrorist attack. Environmental and security concerns are compounded by soaring demand for energy from developing nations, pushing up prices.

American consumers are paying more for gasoline, causing some to fear that energy prices will depress economic growth. And American politicians are feeling more pressure to address climate change.

Energy policies from Republican and Democratic politicians must take all of these issues into consideration. All three remaining candidates, Democrats Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and Republican John McCain, favor addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This would require changing the current system of relying on fossil fuels, and switching to alternative fuels.

Senator Clinton's energy policy focuses on reducing consumption of foreign oil by 50 percent within 20 years, and encourages power companies to make renewable energy at least 20 percent of their power supply by 2020. Clinton also proposes eliminating tax breaks for oil companies and using those funds to create a Strategic Energy Fund.

This money would fund clean coal technology and other innovations while giving tax incentives for fuel-efficient vehicles. She has called for the creation of links between China, India and other major energy-consuming nations, as well as the International Energy Agency, in an international



An iceberg melts in Kulusuk, Greenland, near the Arctic Circle. (© AP Images)

forum modeled on the G8. Senator Barack Obama wants to reduce oil consumption by over 7 million barrels a day by 2025 and increase the fuel economy of cars to over 27 miles a gallon. He also supports tax breaks for users of clean fuels. Obama has been criticized for supporting coal-to-liquid legislation; some experts say the technology releases more carbon dioxide than gasoline. He argues that the technology will create jobs. The senator also would support more nuclear power if it were safe and the waste securely stored, noting that nuclear power does not produce carbon dioxide. Obama also would invest in new alternative energy technologies and accelerate their commercialization.

Senator McCain co-authored the Lieberman-McCain Climate Stewardship Act in 2005. He favors a market-based mechanism to reduce emissions and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. McCain also has said he would greatly increase the use of nuclear power. Although McCain's support for a limit on greenhouse gas emissions breaks with a number of his colleagues in the Republican party, he believes that a cap-and-trade system would give the free market the right environment to innovate and deploy solutions on the scale necessary to avoid disruptive climate change.

This article is adapted from an article on America.gov, a web site delivering information about current U.S. foreign policy and about American life and culture produced by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs

From the IRC

Books

This Moment on Earth: Today's New Environmentalists and Their Vision for the Future., Kerry, John.

Hell and High Water: Global Warming. Romm, Joseph J.

The Chilling Stars: A New Theory of Climate Change Svensmark, Henrik.

Shattered Consensus: The True State of Global Warming. Rowman & Littlefield

The Rough Guide to Climate Change. Rough Guides Henson, Robert.

Films

An Inconvenient Truth Gore, Al

Online resources

The Candidates on Energy Policy - Council on Foreign Relations
Democratic Candidates on Energy Policy
<http://www.cfr.org>

See at a glance where the presidential contenders stand on climate and energy issues
<http://www.grist.org>

For more information on American Presidential candidates' platforms on the environment
johnmccain.com

hillaryclinton.com

barackobama.com

— Khaled Ben Bhouzid
& the IRC team.

Program Announcements



Fulbright Foreign Student Program

Masters or one year PhD research program at a U.S. university.

<http://www.amideast.org>

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program

Nine month academic and professional study and related professional experience for mid-career professionals from a variety of fields.

<http://tunisia.usembassy.gov>

International Educators Leadership Program (ILEP)

The program will consist of a semester-long academic program at a U.S. university, including coursework and intensive training in teaching methodologies

<http://tunisia.usembassy.gov>

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Asma

Ben Yahia

**Fulbright
Program**

City you're from in Tunisia : Tunis

City/State where you lived in the U.S. : Ann Arbor, Michigan

Your fondest (best) memory of being in the U.S. : I still cherish many memories from my stay in the U.S. but the fondest of all was my American Literature class with Professor Jonathan Freedman, who was my academic advisor back then. We were nine students from different backgrounds and in order to foster exchange, Dr. Freedman introduced the "breakfast idea" whereby we would take turns to contribute breakfast at the beginning of each class. By the end of the term, we ended up discovering and sharing food and ideas.

One of the most important things you learned from your experience: One of the most important things I have learned from my experience, is that, no matter how different we think we are, there is always room for understanding. When I first went to Ann Arbor, I did not know anyone there. Then I started having friends and neighbors with whom I am still in contact. Being flexible and open to differences is the key to long-lasting friendships. What is interesting is that one of my friends there has recently moved to Tunisia. I find

this very telling as now I do have the chance to stand by her the way she did when both of us were in the U.S.

Your advice for someone thinking about going on the program: Go for it without any hesitation. The program is a real opportunity not only for academic achievements but also a great chance to develop self-reliance, flexibility and tolerance.

What you most miss about the U.S. What I miss most about the U.S. is the fact of being able to preserve one's privacy while being in public. My picture with my daughter illustrates that very aspect. It was taken at the library where I used to do my readings and work on my projects each time I felt I needed some change of scene from my flat. Sometimes I would take my daughter with me during her nap time and I would stay there. We would obviously head for home or the nearest coffee shop as soon as she would get up so as to preserve other people's privacy.

Briefly describe your experience (where you stayed, who with, how big your school was, what activities you did while there, etc. One of the activities I used to do while there among others was to attend the Wednesday talks at the Ecumenical Center, a residence hall housing with many international students and visiting scholars, which was a block down my flat on Church street. We would listen to a speaker on a current subject, express ourselves freely and then share dinner together.

Calendar

Open Fulbright Information Session

Wednesday, May 14

AMIDEAST

3:00 PM

Final Information Meeting for Fulbright Students Program

Statement of Purpose Workshops

Wednesday, May 28

AMIDEAST

10:00 AM

Graduate Statement of Purpose workshop

Find out what admissions officers in the US are looking for in a graduate (3eme cycle) a personal statement

11:30 AM

Undergraduate Statement of Purpose workshop Find out what admissions officers in the US are looking for in an undergraduate (1er & 2eme cycle) a personal statement

Free English Conversation

Every Thursday

American Corner at AMIDEAST
4:00 PM

Weekly discussions on topics from films and music to religion. Topics are posted weekly in the American Corner and at AMIDEAST.

Study in the USA Consultations

Every Tuesday-Friday

AMIDEAST Advising Resource Library
9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Browse materials from U.S. universities consult resources on applications and scholarships.

Open Access

Every Monday-Friday

American Corner at AMIDEAST
10:00 AM-6:00 PM

Peruse books and magazines in English on topics from history to pop culture and more.

American Corner at AMIDEAST
22, Rue Al Amine al Abassi, Cite des Jardins, 1002 tunis-Belvedere, tel. 71-790-563 ext. 106



The American Center

U.S. Embassy Tunis
Public Affairs Section
Les Berges du Lac
1053 TUNIS, Tunisia
Tel. +216 71-107-0000
Fax +21671-963-263

E-mail:

tuniswebsitecontact@state.gov

Web site:

<http://tunis.usembassy.gov>



New!

Log in to <https://alumni.state.gov>

to visit your new **Tunisian Alumni Community**, a section of the State Alumni website!